

VERTIGO



F A B L E S

Bill WILLINGHAM

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When You Need a

HERO!

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suggested for
mature readers
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A REVOLUTION in OZ

Chapter Eleven: Emperor Bufkin

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THAT NIGHT, AND ALL
THROUGH THE NEXT
DAY, WE CELEBRATED!

WE
WON! WE
WON!

DING DONG,
THE NOME KING
IS DEAD!

MY BOYFRIEND
PARTIED HARDER
THAN ANYONE.

WHICH
NOME
KING?

OUR
MEAN NOME
KING!

NOME KING
COULDN'T HAVE BEEN
ALL THAT BAD, CONSIDERING
HE KEPT A HUGE STOCKPILE
OF BOOZE AND DIDN'T LOCK
NONE OF IT AWAY!

WELL, THAT
DOESN'T NARROW IT
DOWN MUCH. TRUTH BE
TOLD, ALL THE NOMES
TEND TOWARDS MEANNESS.
WHOEVER THEY ELECT IS
LIKELY TO BE JUST
AS--

HEY!





DO WE EVEN GET TO HAVE A NEW NOME KING? WILL BUFKIN LET US?

WHY NOT? AND WHY WOULD *BUFKIN* HAVE A SAY IN IT, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER?

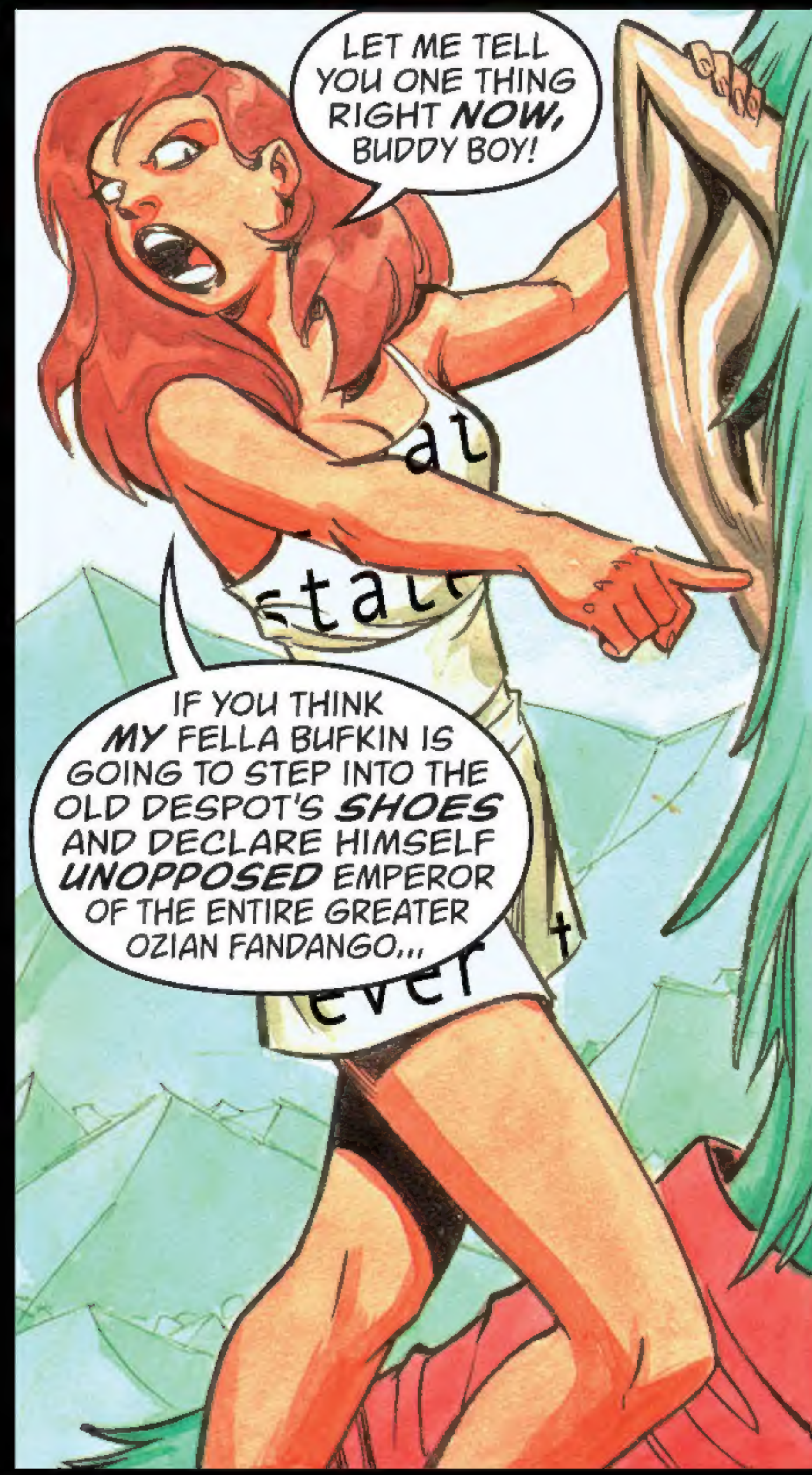


WELL, BECAUSE HE'S GOING TO BE THE NEW *EMPEROR* OF THE COMBINED OZIAN EMPIRE.

ISN'T HE?



WHO SAYS?



LET ME TELL YOU ONE THING RIGHT NOW, BUDDY BOY!

IF YOU THINK MY FELLA BUFKIN IS GOING TO STEP INTO THE OLD DESPOT'S *SHOES* AND DECLARE HIMSELF *UNOPPOSED* EMPEROR OF THE ENTIRE GREATER OZIAN FANDANGO...



THAT'S A *GREAT* IDEA!

I AGREE!

ALL HAIL BUFKIN THE FIRST!



HEY!
HOLD ON
THERE! REIN
IT IN!
WAIT JUST
A NOSE-PICKING
MINUTE!



I HAVE **NO**
NOTION OF BECOMING
EMPEROR OF OZ! ZERO!
NADA! NEIN!

I'M NOT
GOING TO BE
ANYONE'S
EMPEROR!



SURE,
I'D BE **GOOD** AT
IT. HOW COULD I
NOT BE?

I MEAN--
JUST LOOK
AT ME.



OH, I'M
LOOKING,
MONKEY
MAN.

I'M
LOOKING
ALLA DAMN
TIME.

I'M **BUILT**
OF AWESOMINITY!
BORN TO LEAD!



BUT NOT
HERE AND NOT
NOW.

EXCELLENT! SO I CAN
BE EMPEROR, SINCE YOU
DON'T WANT IT?

NEXT: Monkey
gives a speech.

A REVOLUTION in OZ

Chapter Twelve: The Talking Monkey

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LONG AFTER WE SOBERED UP, MY BOYFRIEND STILL HAD A BEE IN HIS BONNET ABOUT THAT "CROWNING HIM THE NEW EMPEROR OF OZ" BUSINESS.

I CALLED YOU HERE, BACK TO THE *OLD* CAMP, BECAUSE YOU WERE THE FIRST MEMBERS OF THE GRAND AND GLORIOUS STRUGGLE.

SURE, I GOT A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY. WHAT GIRL *DOESN'T* WANT HER GUY TO DO WELL? BUT BUFKIN NEVER LETS ANYTHING DROP UNTIL HE'S THOROUGHLY CHEWED IT TO DEATH.

IT'S HIS WAY, GOD BLESS THE BIG CUTIE.

IT WAS REALLY YOUR REVOLUTION ALL ALONG. I WAS JUST A *HIRED GUN*--A BEOWULF TO YOUR HROTHGAR.

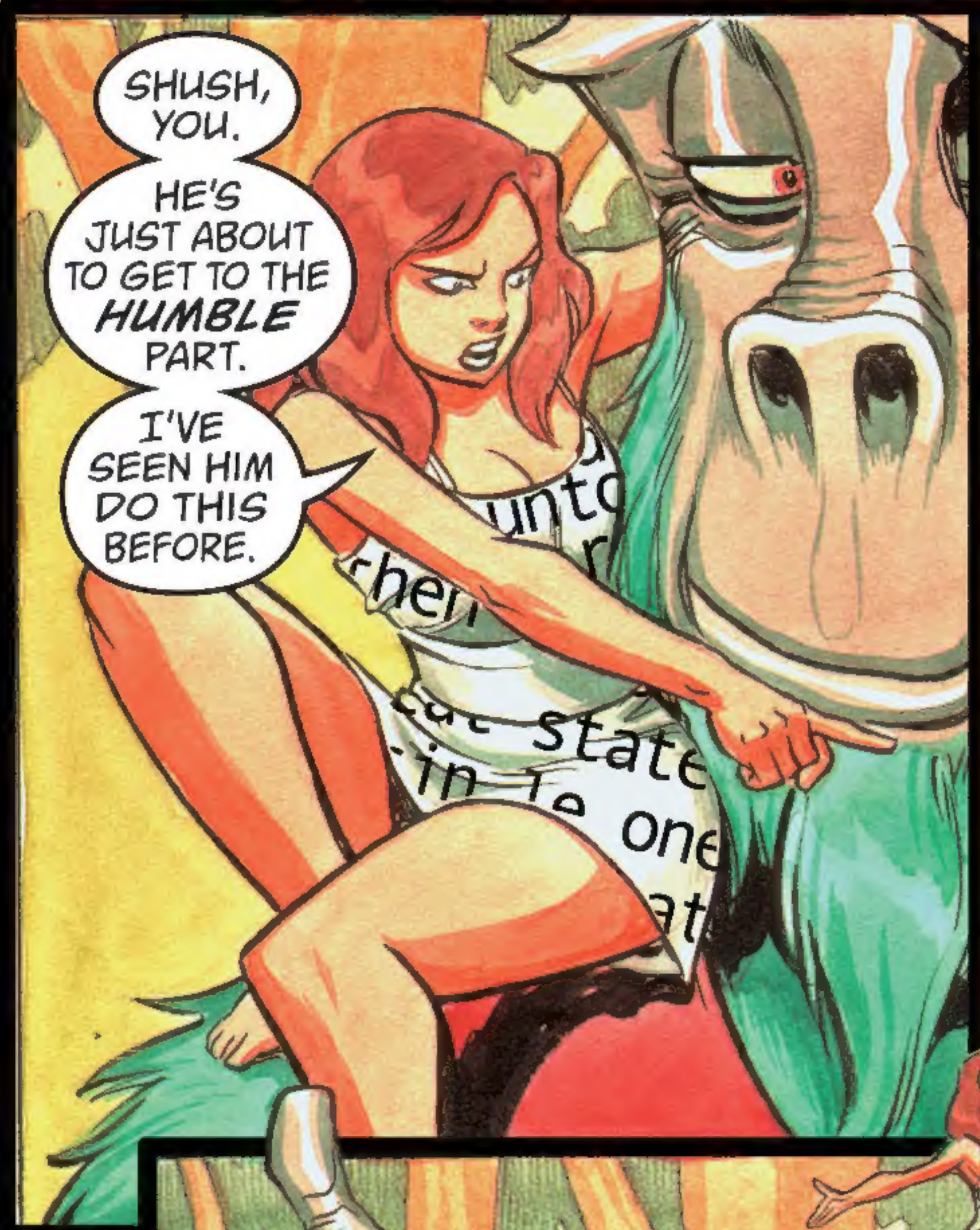
I DON'T THINK I *HAVE* ONE OF THOSE. MAYBE PUMPKINS DON'T COME DOWN WITH HROTHGARS.





JUST YOUR AVERAGE MIGHTY DEMIGOD SUPER HERO WHO HAPPENED BY WHEN YOU NEEDED ME MOST.

DO TELL.



SHUSH, YOU.

HE'S JUST ABOUT TO GET TO THE HUMBLE PART.

I'VE SEEN HIM DO THIS BEFORE.



UHM...SO THEN ANYWAY, EVEN THOUGH I CAME FROM OZ, I DON'T BELONG HERE ANYMORE--WHETHER AS EXALTED LORD EMPEROR OR JUST ANOTHER AVERAGE CITIZEN.

GRANTED: MORE EXTRAORDINARY THAN MOST, BUT YOU GET MY MEANING.



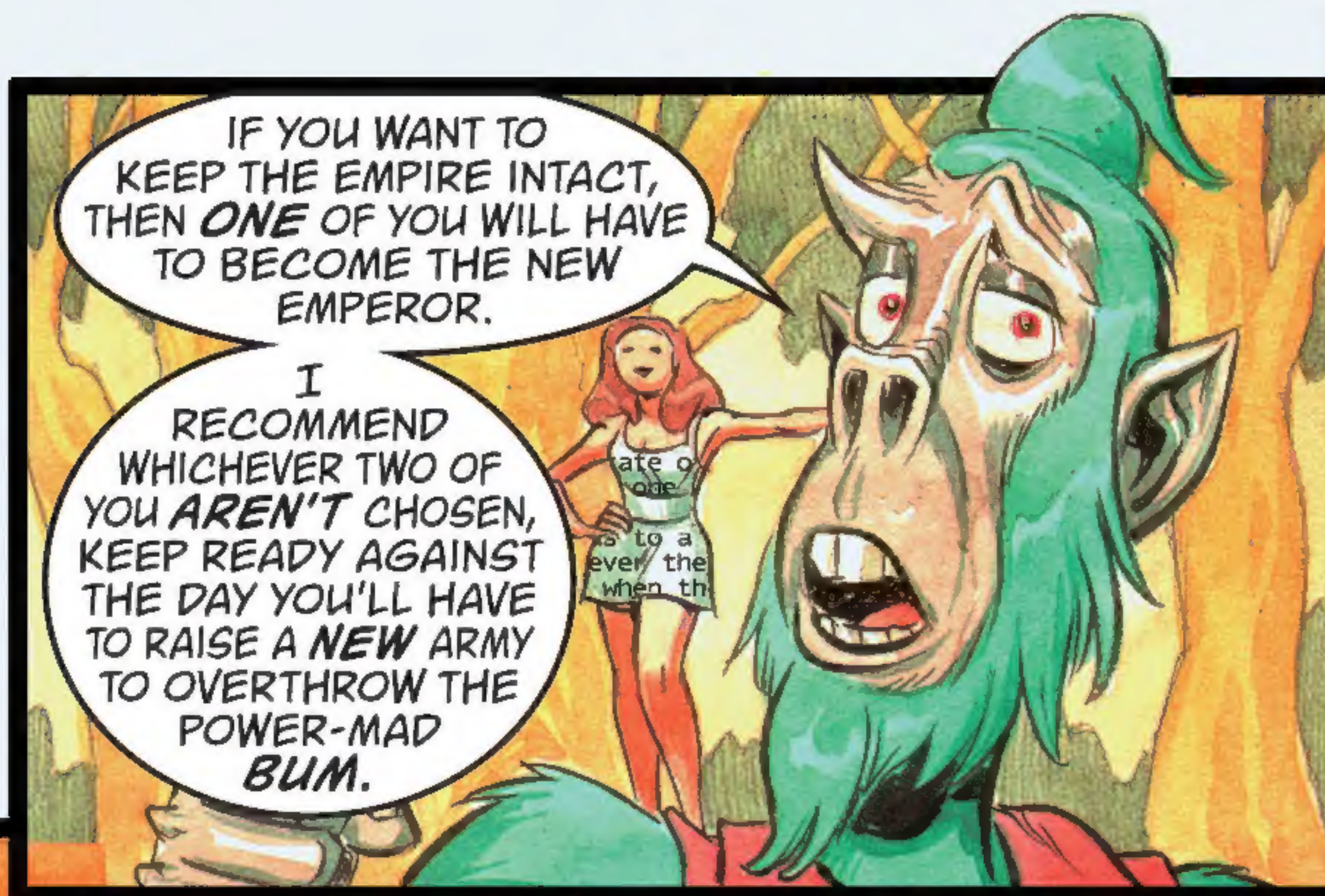
THE REVOLUTION IS OVER AND SO IS MY BUSINESS HERE.

THE HARD WORK OF GOVERNING REMAINS, AND THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN, MY FINE TRIO OF DOUGHTY LIEUTENANTS.



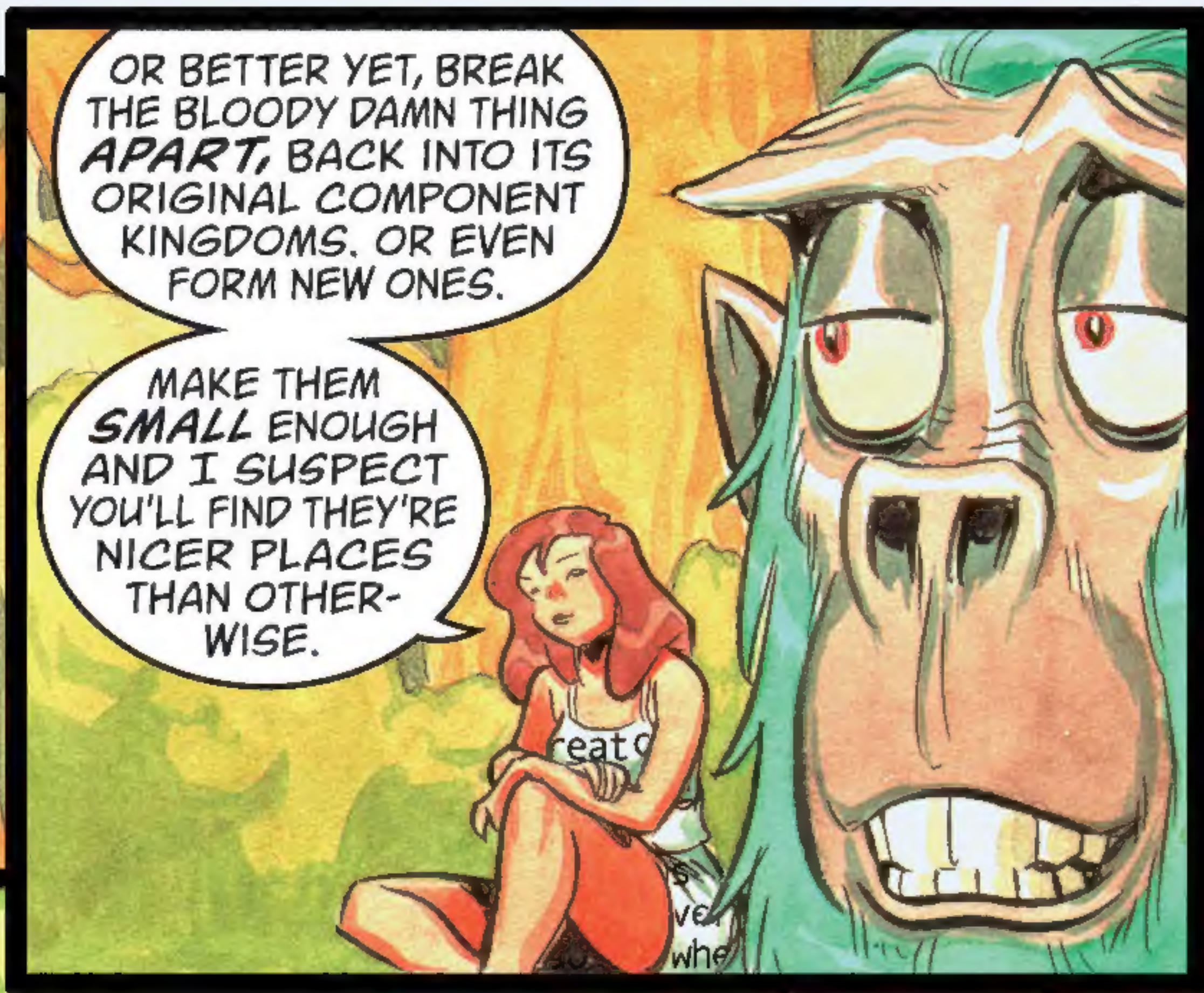
DOUGHTY? DID YOU CALL US DOUGHTY?

THAT MAKES NO SENSE. BETWEEN THE THREE OF US, WE'RE MOSTLY STICKS AND GLASS.



IF YOU WANT TO KEEP THE EMPIRE INTACT, THEN **ONE** OF YOU WILL HAVE TO BECOME THE NEW EMPEROR.

I RECOMMEND WHICHEVER TWO OF YOU **AREN'T** CHOSEN, KEEP READY AGAINST THE DAY YOU'LL HAVE TO RAISE A **NEW** ARMY TO OVERTHROW THE POWER-MAD **BUM**.



OR BETTER YET, BREAK THE BLOODY DAMN THING **APART**, BACK INTO ITS ORIGINAL COMPONENT KINGDOMS. OR EVEN FORM NEW ONES.

MAKE THEM **SMALL** ENOUGH AND I SUSPECT YOU'LL FIND THEY'RE NICER PLACES THAN OTHER-WISE.



YOU AND JUST ABOUT EVERYONE WHO HELPED US COULD BE A **KING** THEN. WHO KNOWS? GIVE IT A SHOT.

BUT WHAT ABOUT--?



BUT WHAT ABOUT **ME**?

I MAY SETTLE DOWN AND RULE SOMEPLACE **SOMEDAY**, BUT NOT YET.

THE ADVENTUROUS ROAD STILL CALLS TO ME FOR NOW.



WHEREVER THERE ARE PEOPLE IN DIRE BONDAGE, I'LL **BE** THERE.

WHEREVER THERE'S INJUSTICE TO MAKE **JUSTIFIABLE** AGAIN, I'LL **BE** THERE!

I WASN'T GOING TO ASK THAT.

NEXT: The departure.

A REVOLUTION
in
OZ

Chapter Thirteen:
The Departure

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AFTER HIS BIG SPEECH, MY
BOYFRIEND ANNOUNCED HE
AND I WOULD BE LEAVING
IMMEDIATELY, WHICH IS
WHAT WE DID.

BUT WE
DIDN'T
GET FAR.

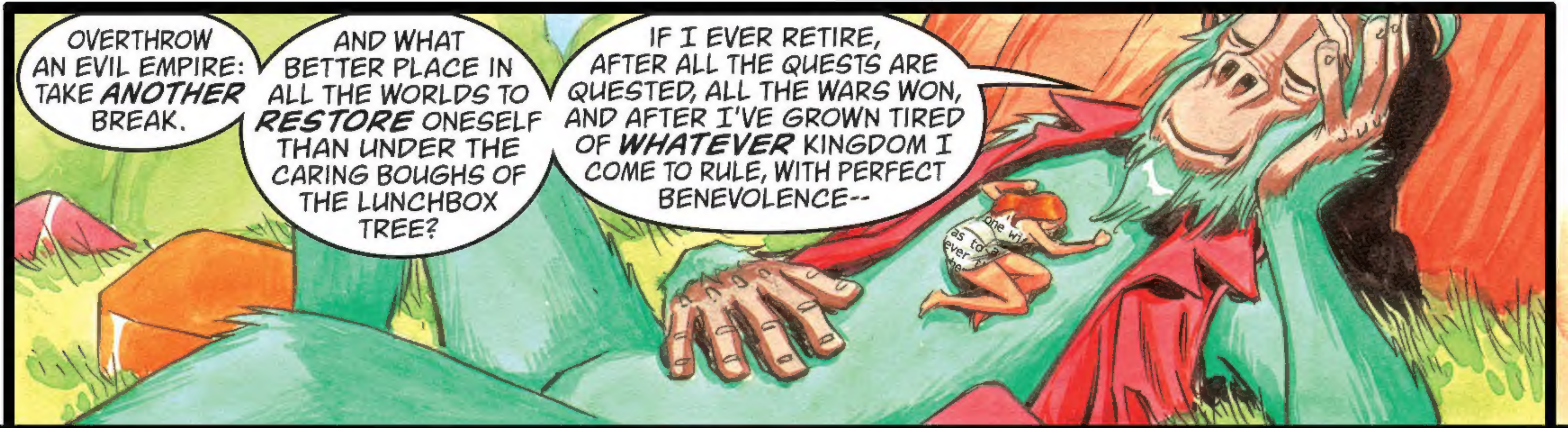
SO
WHEN ARE
WE ACTUALLY
LEAVING?

SOON,
LILY.
SOON.

A HERO NEEDS
HIS *RESTORATION*
BETWEEN THRILLING
ADVENTURES.

BOTTLE A
GENIE AND KILL
BABA YAGA: TAKE
A BREAK.

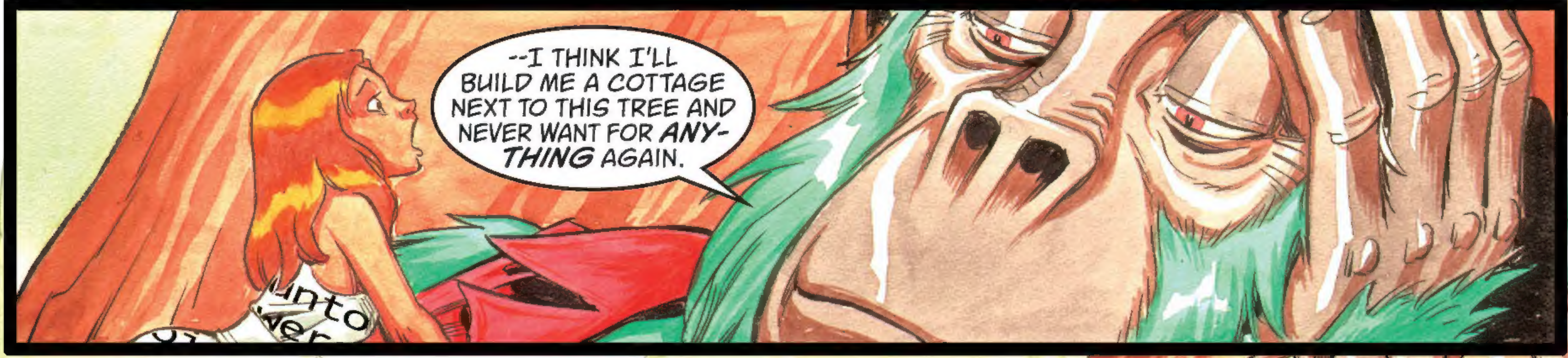




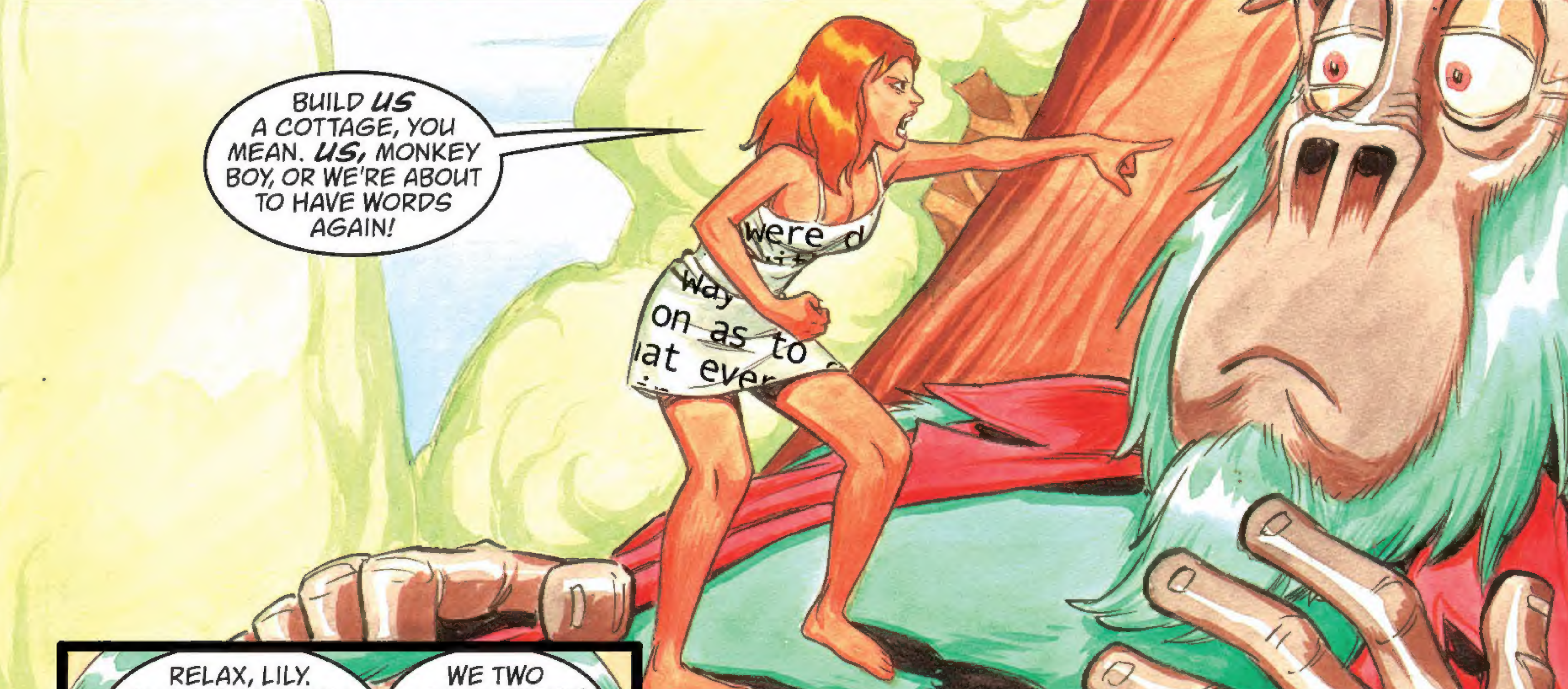
OVERTHROW AN EVIL EMPIRE: TAKE **ANOTHER** BREAK.

AND WHAT BETTER PLACE IN ALL THE WORLDS TO **RESTORE** ONESELF THAN UNDER THE CARING BOUGHS OF THE LUNCHBOX TREE?

IF I EVER RETIRE, AFTER ALL THE QUESTS ARE QUESTED, ALL THE WARS WON, AND AFTER I'VE GROWN TIRED OF **WHATEVER** KINGDOM I COME TO RULE, WITH PERFECT BENEVOLENCE--



--I THINK I'LL BUILD ME A COTTAGE NEXT TO THIS TREE AND NEVER WANT FOR **ANYTHING** AGAIN.



BUILD **US** A COTTAGE, YOU MEAN. **US**, MONKEY BOY, OR WE'RE ABOUT TO HAVE WORDS AGAIN!



RELAX, LILY. OF COURSE IT WILL BE FOR THE BOTH OF **US**. BUT AS LIFELONG **FRIENDS**, NOT LOVERS.

WE TWO AREN'T **BUILT** FOR ROMANCE. NOT WITH EACH OTHER.



PARTNERS IN **ADVENTURE**, BUT NOT THE OTHER THING. ROBIN AND LITTLE JOHN, BUT NOT ROBIN AND MARION.

SHERLOCK AND WATSON, BUT NOT SHERLOCK AND THAT RED-HEADED WOMAN WHOSE **NAME** ALWAYS ESCAPES ME.



RED SONJA.

I THINK THAT WAS HER NAME.

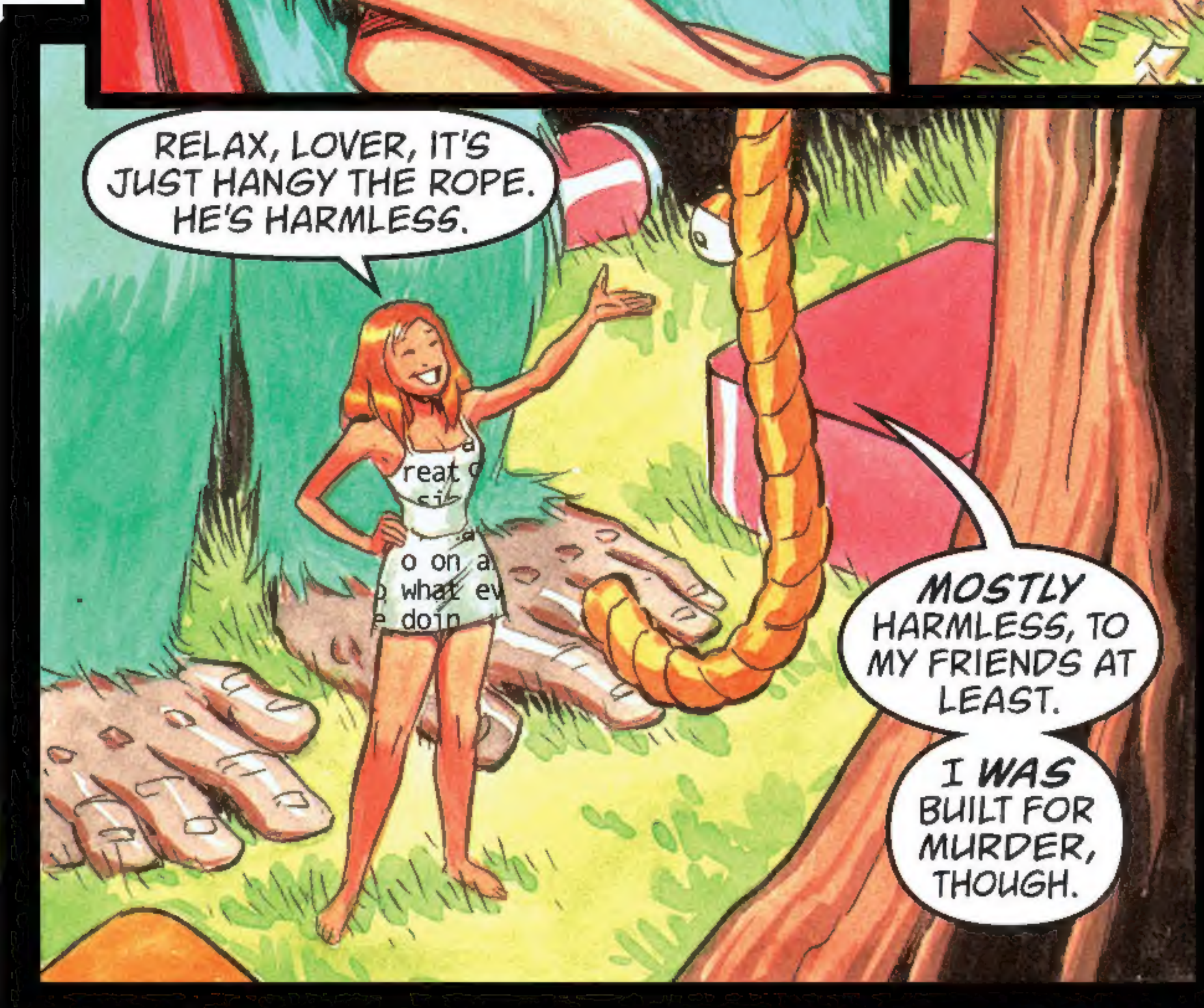
OR WAS IT JEAN GREY?



THERE YOU ARE!

DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG IT TOOK ME TO TRACK YOU TWO DOWN?

YOW!



RELAX, LOVER, IT'S JUST HANGY THE ROPE. HE'S HARMLESS.

MOSTLY HARMLESS, TO MY FRIENDS AT LEAST.

I WAS BUILT FOR MURDER, THOUGH.



AND WHY EXACTLY ARE YOU HERE?

TO GO WITH YOU, OF COURSE. THE LONG ROAD'S A RAINBOW, BOSS.



AND THAT'S HOW WE WERE FINALLY INSPIRED TO SET OUT FOR ADVENTURES UNKNOWN.

SEE? I CAN CARRY MOST OF THE SUPPLIES WE NEED.

ARE YOU KIDDING? THAT'S BARELY ENOUGH LUNCHBOXES TO GET MY FELLA THROUGH A SINGLE LUNCH.

SHUSH, YOU.

ONWARD!

The End

Let me tell you what I know about the nearly legendary couple, Bufkin and Lily, and the adventures I shared with them. The real version.

Not that fabricated nonsense which appeared in the series of dollar novels written by the disreputable Marcus Thomas Buckingham,* who never actually met any of us, though he claimed to on four occasions.

I got no flowery prose in me. All I can give you is the undecorated facts.

YOU
SAVED OUR
VILLAGE!

IT'S
WHAT WE
DO.

*Not to be confused with his delightful and celebrated son, Tommy Buckingham, who invented the Etheric Autodoubler.

AFTER

Being an account of the life and adventures of Bufkin, Lily and Hangy the Rope, in the days and years following certain incidents of note that took place in Oz and its immediate environs.

BILL
WILLINGHAM
WRITER-CREATOR

SHAWN
MCMANUS
ARTIST

TODD
KLEIN
LETTERS

GREGORY
LOCKARD
ASST. EDITOR

SHELLY
BOND
EDITOR

I have no idea how old Bufkin was before I came to life in Oz with my coils around his throat.



He'd never say.

CAREFUL NOW.

YOU BE CAREFUL, BUDDY BOY. I WON'T BE STUCK RAISING A BUNCH OF FATHER-LESS KIDS.



But he lived another seven hundred and forty-two years (by your reckoning) following the revolution in Oz.

WE DON'T HAVE ANY KIDS.

NOT YET. I LIVE IN HOPE.

OKAY, LET'S GO!



In that time our doughty trio of heroes accomplished quite a bit.

CHARGE!



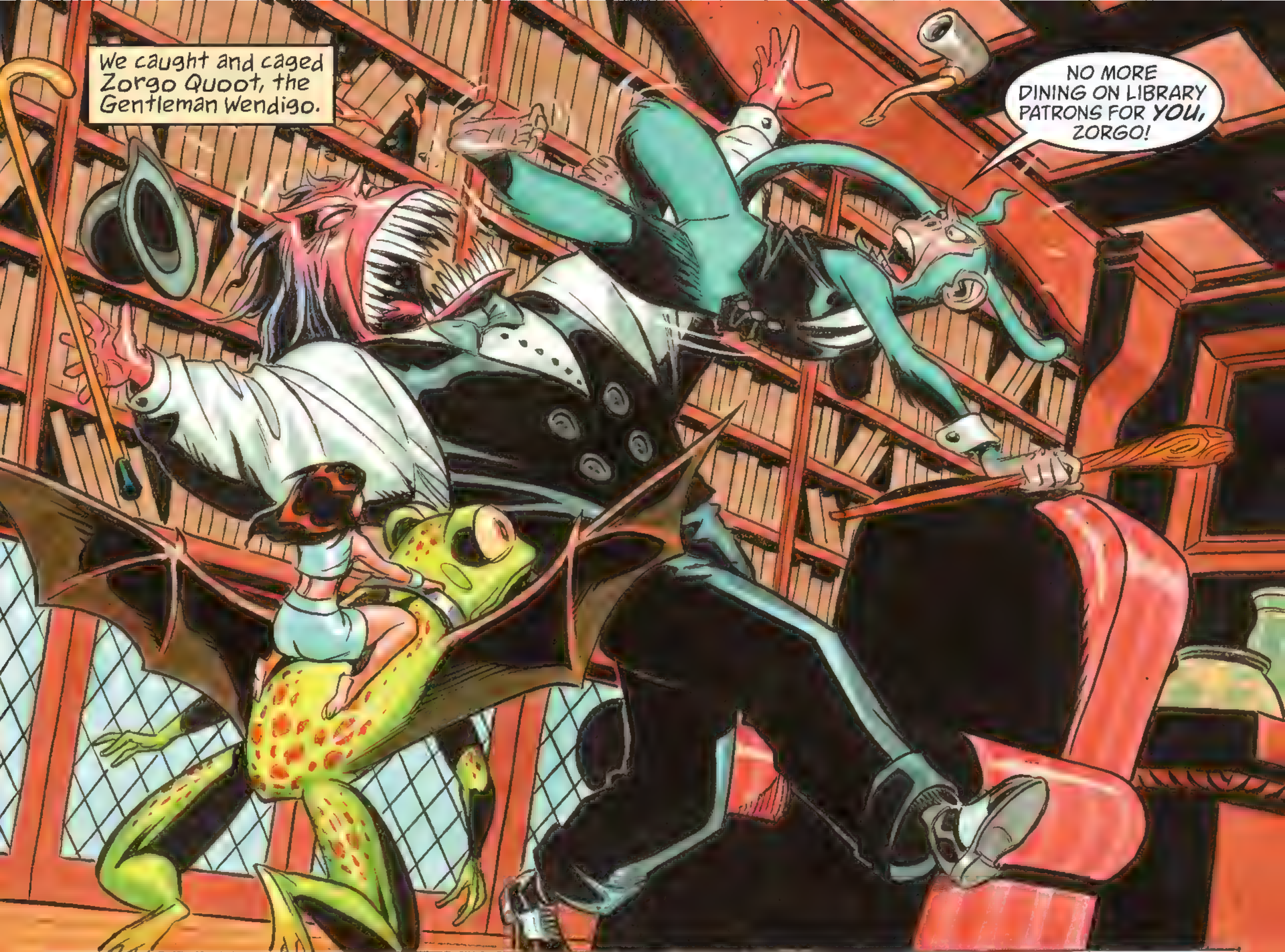
We freed the seven Wilding Trees of the Black Forest from their ages-long servitude to the Sorcerer Wyrn, Kel Yarowm.

WE'RE FIXIN' TO MAKE YOU LOSE WOOD, PAL!



We caught and caged Zorgo Quoot, the Gentleman Wendigo.

NO MORE DINING ON LIBRARY PATRONS FOR YOU, ZORGO!



STAND BY YOUR WAVE-MAKERS!



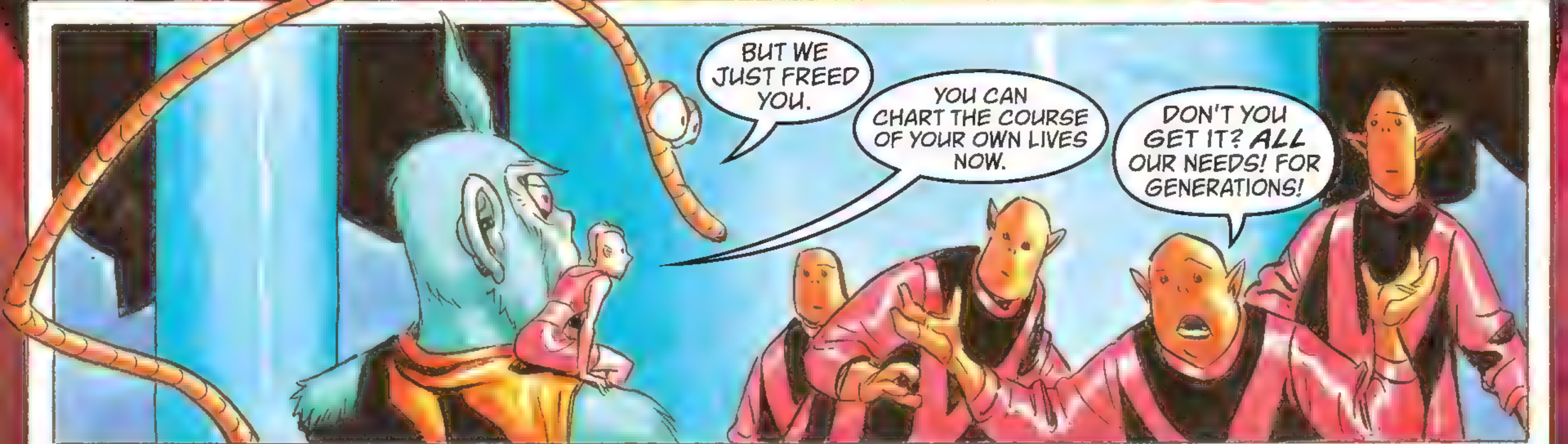
Helped turn the tide against Wanderharth, the living Drift.



Of course we weren't always heralded as heroes. Meddlers and interlopers were among the terms we heard most often.

WE HAVE TO **FEND** FOR OURSELVES NOW?

BUT THE TYRANT PROVIDED FOR ALL OUR NEEDS!



BUT WE JUST FREED YOU.

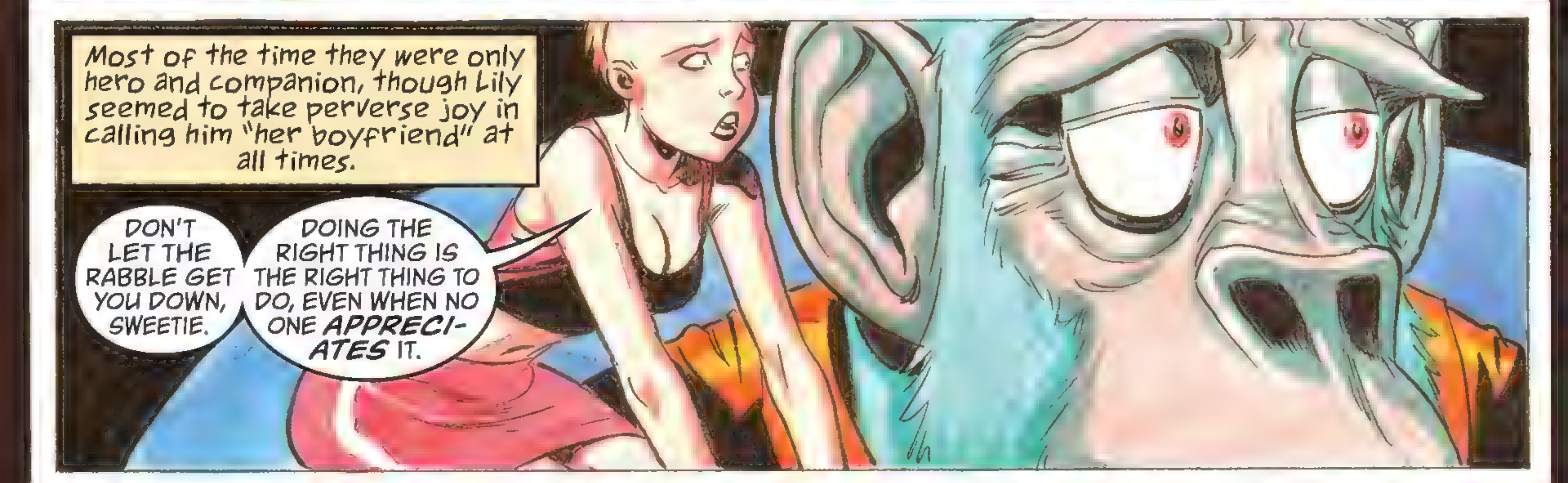
YOU CAN CHART THE COURSE OF YOUR OWN LIVES NOW.

DON'T YOU GET IT? ALL OUR NEEDS! FOR GENERATIONS!



HOW THE HELL CAN WE BE EXPECTED TO DO FOR OURSELVES NOW? WE HAVE NO SKILLS!

THEN YOU'D BEST LEARN **QUICKLY**, FOLKS. FREEDOM IS MESSY, BUT WORTH IT.



Most of the time they were only hero and companion, though Lily seemed to take perverse joy in calling him "her boyfriend" at all times.

DON'T LET THE RABBLE GET YOU DOWN, SWEETIE.

DOING THE RIGHT THING IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO, EVEN WHEN NO ONE APPRECIATES IT.

But there were three occasions when the odd circumstances of their lives made possible the romance she'd always sought.

AH HA!
I KNEW
IT!

KRAKK!

YOU WERE
JUST HELPING ME
TO GET TO MY...AH...
SPECIAL FRIEND!

The first time was when Lily was captured by the evil Doctor Karlo Von Kongmacher, who Bufkin hired to grow his arm and wings back.

HERE'S
TO YOU,
KARLO!

KLIK

BOFF

**AHHA-
HAHAHAHA-
AGGGH!**

TEND TO LILY!
I'VE GOT THE FIEND
ALL TIED UP!

Bufkin made short work of the mad scientist, but not before he transformed Lily into a giant ape.

When you start with a woman only three inches tall, being turned into a giant monkey made her just right for hero and heroine to hook up.



WHY, LILY!

OUR STARS HAVE FINALLY ALIGNED.

YOU'RE GORGEOUS!

That romance lasted a good thirty years and produced a dozen offspring before the effects wore off, returning Lily to her previous species and stature.



THAT'S THE LAST OF THEM. ALL GROWN UP AND FLED THE NEST.

YEAH, BUT WE DID GOOD BY EVERY ONE OF THEM, LILY DARLING. THEY EACH GOT INTO GOOD SCHOOLS.

The second woo-possible interlude happened when Lily came across the wishing fork of Ladeedah and yielded to temptation.



I WISH MY MAN BUFKIN WAS SIZE AND SPECIES APPROPRIATE FOR SOME GOOD OLD-FASHIONED HOW-DO-YOU-DO.

That lasted for a dozen years, but we lived in a dangerous place then.

WE NEED HANGY! WHERE THE HELL IS THAT DAMNED ROPE?

VISITING HIS STUPID FRIENDS!

No children lived long enough to come of it.

NO, SILLY, I'M NOT GETTING FAT. I'M PREGNANT AGAIN.

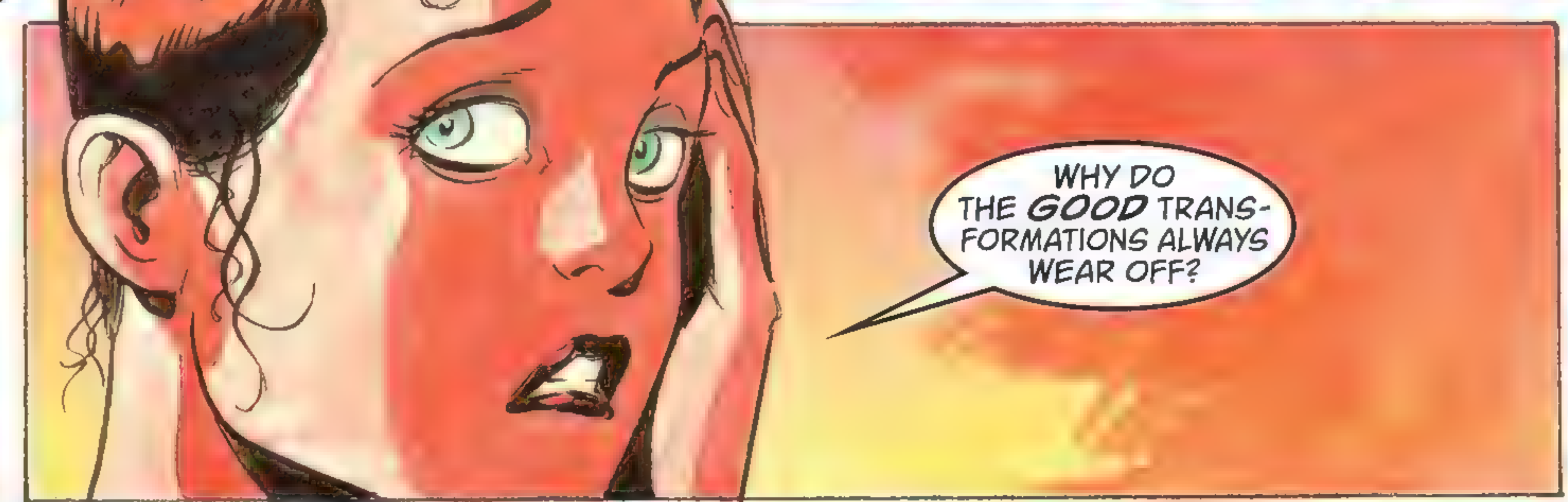
REALLY?

WAHOOOOO!

YEAH, BEING A MALE BARLEYCORN BRIDE IS OKAY, BUT I WISH I WERE TALLER.

YOU ARE GETTING TALLER. I THINK THE WISH IS WEARING OFF.

WHY DO THE GOOD TRANSFORMATIONS ALWAYS WEAR OFF?



The third and final time they got together, in any sort of physical way, was near the end, when they both got a big dose of Umpamas Gas.

GOOD CLUTCH THIS TIME, LILY DARLING.

TELL ME ABOUT IT. I FEEL LIKE I DROPPED AN URBAN SUB-DIVISION.

Turned them into giant Korob Birds, as that particular gas is wont to do.

HE'S ABOUT TO JOG LEFT!

CUT HIM OFF, SMIGLEY!

Hundreds of their children survived from those years. I guess that inspired me.

YEAH, KEEP SNIPPING OFF SMALL LENGTHS OF MY TAIL.

TRUST ME. THIS CAN WORK--I KNOW IT. THEY'LL GROW AUTONOMOUSLY TO BE MY KIDS!

I see already that I left so much out--like the time we conquered the floating cities of Dabb. I warned you I was no natural storyteller.

REMEMBER, *DON'T* KILL THE SLAVES. WE'RE ALL ABOUT *LIBERATING* THEM.

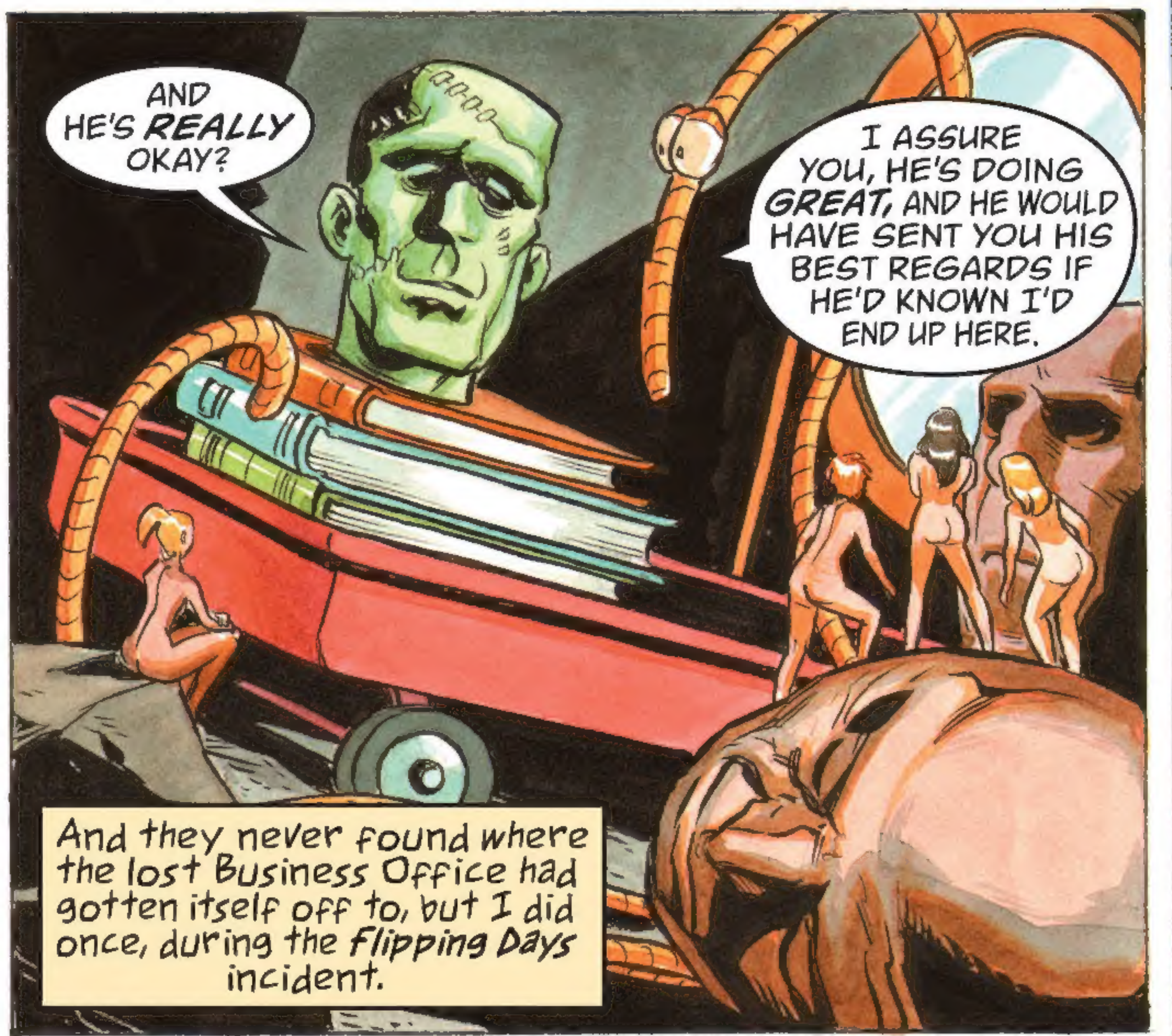
THEY'RE THE ONES IN THE PURPLE TUNICS AND THE NECK COLLARS.

SO? WHAT DO *WE* CARE ABOUT SPARING THEM?

LOOK AT IT IN A STRICTLY SELF-SERVING WAY, THEN. SACRIFICING *THEM* IS WHAT POWERS THE NECROMANCY THAT KEEPS THE ISLANDS AFLOAT, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

KILL THE SLAVES AND YOU'RE JUST POWERING THE SAME COMBAT SPELLS THE BAD GUYS ARE ABOUT TO USE AGAINST US.

Bufkin and Lily never quite found their way back to Fabletown, but some of their kids did in time.



AND HE'S REALLY OKAY?

I ASSURE YOU, HE'S DOING GREAT, AND HE WOULD HAVE SENT YOU HIS BEST REGARDS IF HE'D KNOWN I'D END UP HERE.

And they never found where the lost Business Office had gotten itself off to, but I did once, during the *Flipping Days* incident.

YOU'RE THE SON OF--?

BUFKIN. YOU DON'T REMEMBER BUFKIN?



LOOK OUT! IT'S SPINNING WEBS AS FAST AS YOU CAN ROPE IT!

NONSENSE, FRANKY! I'M THE FASTEST ROPE IN THE WEST!

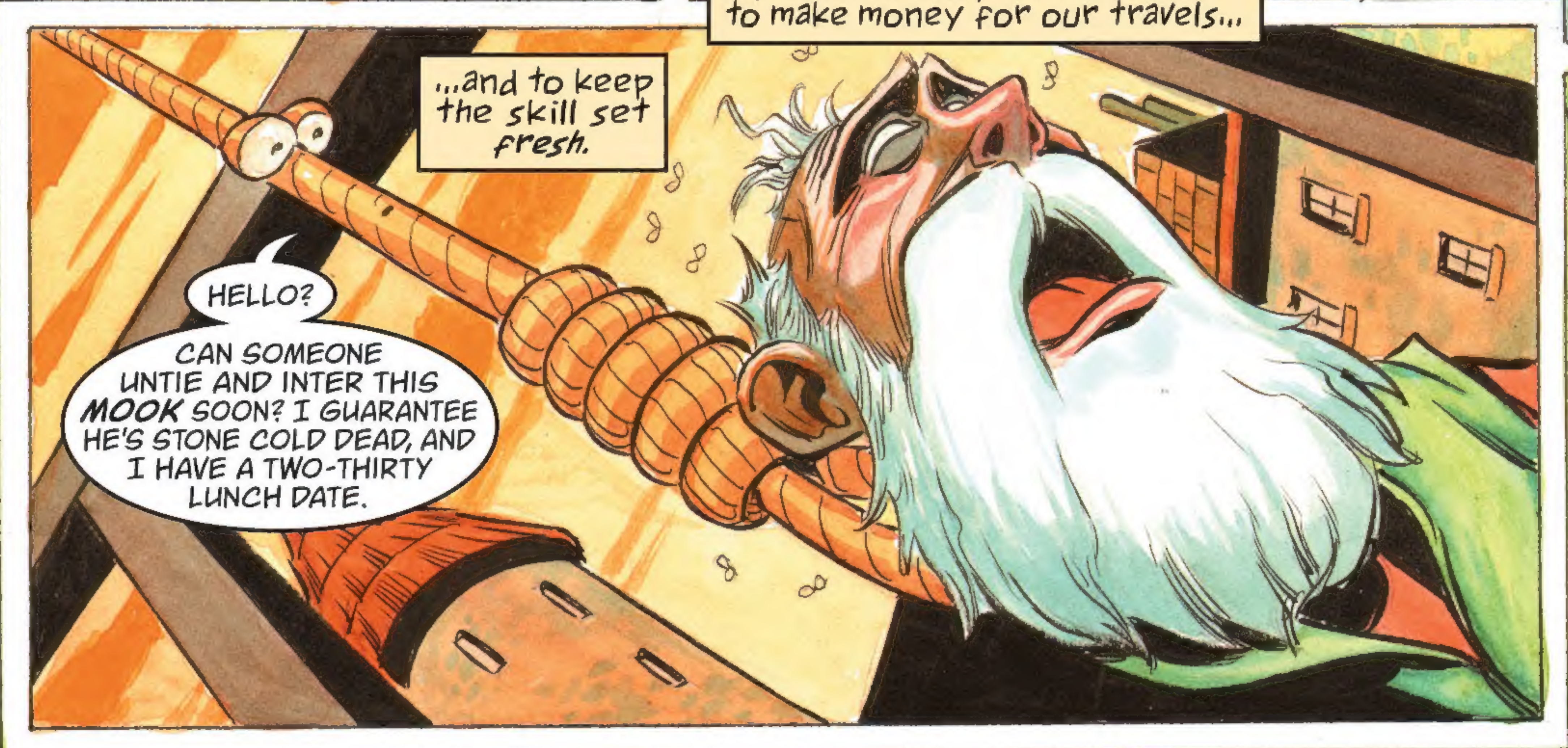
I had many grand adventures with Franky, The Mirror, and the rest of the gang before the next *Flip Day* took me away again to a new world.

From time to time I went back to my beloved old profession, both to make money for our travels...

...and to keep the skill set fresh.

HELLO?

CAN SOMEONE LUNTIE AND INTER THIS MOOK SOON? I GUARANTEE HE'S STONE COLD DEAD, AND I HAVE A TWO-THIRTY LUNCH DATE.



Finally, after their wars were all won, and his adventures long played out, Bufkin and Lily returned to Oz and that beloved lunchbox tree.

ARE YOU JUST GOING TO LIE THE DAY AWAY OUT HERE?

CAN'T SEE WHY NOT.

True to his word, he built a cottage there, where he lived out his final days in peace and plenty.

AND THE CHORES ARE GOING TO DO THEMSELVES, ARE THEY?

THAT'S WHAT OFFSPRING ARE FOR. MY WORK'S ALL DONE IN THIS LIFE, DARLING O' MY HEART.

YOU MAKE A GOOD POINT, DEAREST.

After Bufkin passed away, Lily barely lived another twenty days--just long enough to write a few letters to the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

We buried her beside him, the way she asked.

BUFKIN
THE BRAVE
*
HERO TO THE
OPPRESSED
*
THREE TIMES
BELOVED
HUSBAND
TO LILY

LILY
MARTANION
*
SHE FREED
MANY FROM
BONDAGE
*
THREE TIMES
BELOVED
WIFE TO
BUFKIN

Next: Cold, Cold Snow

